

CIRCULAR LETTER, No. I.

Sanitary Protection Association

OF

NEWPORT, R. I.

The sanitary condition of houses and cities has been, for the past few years, occupying the attention of physicians, sanitarians and scientific minds throughout the civilized world to such an extent, that all intelligent men are now keenly alive to the importance of proper sanitary surroundings, and especially the sanitary condition of their own individual habitations. The questions now arise in the minds of every one, whether they are occupying houses of their own, or hired houses, or are about to seek a new house :—

(a) Are the sanitary surroundings of the house perfect? Do the trees and shrubbery permit sufficient exposure of it to the sun?

(b) Is the water pure and drinkable? If from a well or cistern, has it connection with the external air?

(c) Is the cellar dry, well ventilated and free from decomposing matter which may give forth seeds of sickness and death, and has it a drain? This drain, if possible, must be wholly unconnected with any sewer, but if connected should be carefully trapped.

(d) Is the cellar air entirely excluded from the air supply of the furnace?

(e) Has every bed chamber free ventilation and direct means of communication with the external air?

(*f*) If contagious or infectious disease has occurred in the house, have the sick chamber, etc. (bedding, wearing apparel, curtains, carpet and upholstered furniture), been thoroughly disinfected, and the wall paper removed?

(*g*) Has each water closet means of external ventilation, and not into an entry or bed chamber?

(*h*) Are the soil pipes in a sound condition and easily accessible for examination? Are they of iron, with lead plugged joints (the only true condition for a properly constructed soil pipe)? or are they of lead? and if of lead have they been in the house for a number of years, and thus perforated with holes through which sewer gas escapes into the house?

(*i*) Has the soil pipe a proper vent through the roof?

(*j*) Is the soil pipe in its exit through the foundation of the house, of iron or of earthen ware? if of the latter is it broken off in or just outside of the foundation, so as to allow the sewage matter of the house to find its way throughout the foundation (a condition which is almost always found to exist where earthen ware pipes are used)?

(*k*) If there are set bath tubs, basins or wash tubs, are they securely trapped? Is the kitchen sink safely trapped? It must not be forgotten that the ordinary bell trap does not perfectly exclude sewer gas, which its water absorbs and transmits, and that the S trap is liable to be "syphoned", or emptied by inward suction, so as to permit the escape of gas into the house from the soil pipe or drain.

(*l*) Is the waste water pipe of the refrigerator entirely cut off from all connection with the soil pipe?

(*m*) Is the cesspool near the foundation wall? is the cesspool a loose one? and is there any overflow, or leakage into the foundation, cistern or well?

If all these conditions are answered to the satisfaction of a sanitarian, then one may consider his home in a healthy condition, and the occupants of it free from all danger of contracting Diphtheria or Typhoid fever from it. It is the almost universal opinion of physicians that every case of Diphtheria and Typhoid fever is preventable, and that wherever a case occurs, there are some bad sanitary surroundings. Even where Diphtheria, like Scarlet fever, has originated from direct contagion, it is probable that exposure to unhealthy influences at home has predisposed the individual to contract the disease more easily, and it is certain that such conditions render both of these diseases more liable to become fatal. When these facts are substantiated does it not behoove every one to see that his house is put in order?

With a house in perfect sanitary condition (which it is possible for every one to have), many deaths, and a vast amount of sickness and physical debility will be saved, and the period of life lengthened.

According to the census of 1870, over 100,000 lives were sacrificed by preventable diseases, in the United States during that year, and over \$100,000,000 lost thereby. Is it not our duty therefore to lend our assistance to diminish this unnecessary mortality and pecuniary waste?

A few of the citizens of Newport are awake to their duty, and in 1878 associated themselves together and formed a Sanitary Protection Association. The general outline and object of the association, and the privileges of its members are :—

1st. To provide its members, at a moderate cost, with such advice and supervision as shall insure the proper sanitary condition of their own dwellings.

2d. To enable members to procure practical advice, on moderate terms, as to the best means of remedying defects in houses of the poorer classes, in which they may be interested.

3d. To aid in improving the sanitary condition of the city.

Each member is entitled to the following privileges in respect of property within the municipality of Newport :

1. An immediate report by the Inspecting Engineer of the association on the sanitary condition of one dwelling or property, with specific recommendations if necessary, as to the improvement of drainage, water supply, and ventilation, and a report upon the water by the Analyst.

2. An annual inspection of his premises, with a report as to their sanitary condition.

3. Occasional supplementary inspection and advice concerning the dwelling or property in respect of which he is a subscriber.

4. Each member by his annual payment secures the above privileges in respect of one dwelling or property occupied or designated by him. Should he be interested in two or more dwellings or properties, as owner or occupant, he may secure equal privileges in respect to them all, by paying the annual subscription for each.

5. A report, to be obtainable on payment of a special fee, on any dwelling or property, or plans thereof, which he may wish to hire or purchase.

6. Reports by the officers of the association as to the sanitary condition of any dwellings or properties of the very poor, on payment of a moderate fee.

7. A report, without fee, upon the sanitary condition of any public building, as church, school house, or place of public resort, within the city of Newport.

The Association, in reality a Mutual Insurance Company for the preservation of private and public health, is not intended as a substitute for municipal inspection, and will not conflict with the public authorities, but will supplement their action.

This mutual Sanitary Insurance Association desires to have every house in Newport in a perfect sanitary condition, and as its membership and inspection increase, there will be a corresponding increase of healthy houses in our midst. The association will keep on file the record of every house inspected under its supervision, and these records will be open to all who join, thus enabling those in search of a house to know which houses have been inspected; a point of great practical utility to those seeking summer residences.

The subscription fee of the association is \$5.00. This entitles the member to have his house inspected and to receive a written report of such inspection. The analysis of well or cistern water is \$5.00 extra. Application for membership should be made to the Recording Secretary.

President—HON. SAMUEL POWEL.

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